

*May 6 / Administration of George Bush, 1992*

come to try a new way. So we need to let poor families take back control of their lives by making our commitment to end poverty and despair greater than ever before.

So this time, we've got to make certain to put the Government on the side of opportunity, on the side of human dignity, on the side of hope. Anything less would really be a disservice to the people of Los Angeles who need our help. Anything less would be unworthy of our great country.

In 5 short days, Los Angeles has made great strides, and the number of people who deserve thanks runs up into the tens of thousands: The firefighters, the police officers who worked hours on end. There's this enormous corps of volunteers, I'm told, the churches, the churchgoers, those out in the communities organizing. The many people known and unknown who came to the aid of people that were hurt, people in need, who stepped forward to stop the violence, to save a life.

Let me say something, something I promised myself I'd say the moment we got here, say this to every one of the people who reached out across the barriers of color and

put their own safety at risk to help others: Thank God for what you did. You did more than simply save a life. You gave a Nation great cause for hope. And you proved amidst the hate and the horror that this is still the City of the Angels.

I salute the local officials. I'm very grateful to the Mayor and the others who are here to greet me, from the city council to our Governor. I've listed what the Federal Government can do, but we recognize this is a team effort. I understand that on the ground already is a fantastic volunteer operation, one to stimulate the volunteer sector, and we salute those who are working in that way, too.

So it's a pleasure to be here. I know I will learn a lot from what I see. And I salute those, all of them standing right here with me, incidentally, who have worked tirelessly night and day to restore order and to return the city to a city of hope. Thank you all very, very much.

*Note: The President spoke at 8:50 p.m. at Los Angeles International Airport.*

## Remarks at Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church in Los Angeles *May 7, 1992*

Thank you, Reverend Hill. Let me just say to his parishioners and to his fellow members of the clergy that we Bushes have great respect for your pastor, respect for what he stands for, respect for his leadership, and respect for his emphasis on family values.

I listened to the prayers with wonder, admiration. I think we got a pretty good start, don't you, with Miss Elmore singing, but I heard what His Eminence Cardinal Mahoney said about racial tension. We must address that. What Bishop McMurray and Dr. Billy Ingram said about healing, we've got to address that; what Dr. Massey said about the importance of the church. And as you look at the chaos and turmoil in this country, not just in the wake of the riots of Los Angeles but all the problems we face in the country, the problems we face inter-

nationally, I keep coming back in my own thinking to the importance of the church, the importance of our faith. Then Reverend Massey talked about this is no time for blame, and he's right about that. This is not a time for blame, and I am not here in the mode of politics. I am not here in the mode of partisanship. I am not here in the mode of blame. I'm here to learn from the community and at this moment to tell you of the values that I strongly believe in.

When Reverend Hill and other national leaders came last Friday to the White House, I reminded the group of what Mayor Tom Bradley and other mayors, urban mayors, rural mayors, had to tell me not so many months ago. They told me of their concerns for their cities, their munici-

palities. But they came together on one key point: They told me that their major concern about the problems in the cities was the decline of the American family, the fact that the family is weaker today. I think that we have simply got to find ways to help strengthen the American family. This church does that for the immediate family; all of your churches do that for the families of your parishioners. But we've got to broaden it out.

This church brings the generations, grandparents, great-grandparents, and grandkids, here to work within this church—that strengthens the American family—and to give the kids not only indoctrination into faith and into the teachings of the Lord, but the church helps kids understand the larger family. We are one Nation under God. We must remember that. We must advocate that. We must continue to state that we are one Nation under God.

And we are our brother's keeper, not to keep him back, not to keep him down, but to keep him well and to keep him safe and to give him a shot at the American dream. Family values, that means respect for one another, and it does mean honor thy mother and thy father.

I talked to Barbara this morning and told her a little bit—I didn't know it fully—about what Reverend E.V. Hill had in store for all of us today, but particularly for me. He had failed to point out that he had the distinguished leaders of various denominations here and that I would be flanked behind me by people who are active pastors in the wonderful churches of this area. And she told me, she said, "You've got your nerve. You've got a lot of nerve to stand up in front of all those people and tell them what you think about values." But I'm going to try anyway. [*Laughter*]

I do want to single out Reverend Jones and Mrs. Jones for what they do, reaching across the States, bringing help to others. That's family. That's God's family. Family values means the church must continue to teach the kids right from wrong.

I was over at a supermarket, and the guy with tears in his eyes was telling me, "One of my own employees came in and took stuff out of this store." He couldn't understand it. We've got to teach right from

wrong. Government cannot do that. We can try, those of us in public life, to set reasonably good examples of family and faith. But the values have to be taught, and the church has a tremendously important role on that.

I think that when Barbara reads to kids that she is emphasizing not just the importance of education that we all believe in, so many of you working with children, but she's emphasizing the importance of the role of grandparents; even more, the importance of love.

To struggle against hard times, to overcome the devastation of poverty, of racism, or of riots, we need our family. We need our own family. We need our church family. And we must find ways to strengthen America as a family. Back to what the Cardinal said, we are embarrassed by interracial violence and prejudice. We're ashamed. We should take nothing but sorrow out of all of that and do our level-best to see that it's eliminated from the American dream. A family that respects the law, a family that can lift others up.

We need a family that is truly committed to faith, for again, we are one Nation under God; a family that says "I'm my brother's keeper." But it's here, it was here in the ugliest moments of the rioting, the brother's keeper aspect. I saw it in a police station just now. God bless the honest policemen that are defending the families of the neighborhood, all of them. But the message they got to me this morning was a little different than the one that I see in that first 2 minutes on the evening news. This was a message of forgiving and healing, how neighbors had called in and said, "Here's where you can go and pick up some looted goods," or brought them to the police station so that they could be returned to their owners. We don't hear enough of that kind of family action or that kind of fellowship.

Another pastor, Reverend Bennie Newton, laid his life on the line for his brother. He saw a man literally beaten into the ground, and he waded through the fray, and he laid his body on top of the victim until the beating stopped. And here's what he said. He said, "My heart was crying." But the bottom line is, he saved that man's

life. He was his brother's keeper. These are the stories that I think America needs to know about. We saw the violence. We've seen the hatred. And we've got to heal, to see the love.

Los Angeles is going to recover. This is a great city. And I have pledged to the Governor, to the Mayor the full support of the Federal Government. And if I might take one mention of personal pride here to say that I'm very pleased the way these Departments in the Federal Government have responded. Not to preempt, not to get credit, again, not to assign blame but to supplement the work in the communities, the work of the Mayor, the work of the council, and the work of the Governor. And I'm proud that Lou Sullivan, our Secretary of HHS, and Jack Kemp, our Secretary of HUD, are here today. And many others wanted to be with me, but somebody had to mind the store back there.

Now Los Angeles will recover. I believe it is well on its way to recovery, thanks to what the local government and the State government and this Federal presence are doing. And as Los Angeles comes back to its glory, all of us must ask ourselves: What can we do to help? This is no time to outline Federal programs. This is a National Day of Prayer. This is a day to give our thanks. But we will do what we can to help and to assist and to lead in this reconciliation. To truly help, we've got to understand the agony of the depressed. You can't solve the problem if you don't feel its heartbeat. You've got to understand the hopelessness of those who literally have had no opportunity.

Trucks bringing food and bricks and mortar are rolling into Los Angeles. And this city will be rebuilt. And I am confident that new opportunities will arise. But all across this Nation, we've got to renew our fight to strengthen the American family. It isn't

a burnt-out area in Los Angeles; it isn't California. It is the entire country. That's where everyone in this room, everyone in this hallowed sanctuary comes in. We've got to find ways to do that. We've got to fight against discrimination. We've got to continue to speak out against bigotry. We've got to fight for justice and equality. And on this National Day of Prayer it is fitting that we pray to God to help us.

Abraham Lincoln was right, you can't do it alone. If we asked him what he did in times of turmoil—you think of the problems he faced—he said, "I spent a lot of my time on my knees." We have to understand that that faith is still terribly important to leaders, terribly important to citizens that lead these communities.

So I pray to God that He will give us the strength and the wisdom to bring the family together, the American family. Barbara and I pray that our personal family and your personal families will be engulfed in God's love and that every kid will have someone who knows his name and really cares about him.

One little 4-year-old girl, maybe you heard the story, Ryan Bennett, prayed special prayers as she saw her neighborhood riddled with bullets, her candy store destroyed. And Ryan said, "I asked God if He could make it so it's not dark anymore." Let this Nation vow to help that it won't be dark.

*Note: The President spoke at 9:10 a.m. In his remarks, he referred to Edward V. Hill, pastor of Mount Zion Missionary Baptist Church; Robert W. McMurray, bishop of the 16th episcopal district of the Apostolic Church; Billy Ingram, pastor of Maranatha Church; Floyd Massey, pastor of Macedonia Baptist Church; and Larry Jones, president of Feed the Children International in Oklahoma City, OK, and his wife, Frances.*